

State Technical Assistance Academy  
Programs of Study:  
*Self-Assessment Tool*

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for the  
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**Summary: What is the TA Academy?**

The 2009-10 Technical Assistance (TA) Academy will engage 5 states in a process to develop “green-focused” programs of study (POS). Selected states will be assigned a facilitator to provide ongoing assistance during the term of the project. Up to 10 days of consultation from content experts in “green-focused” industries and POS will be provided to each state. States are responsible for convening in-state meetings and for participating in a 3-day TA Academy in Washington, DC, which will be held winter 2010. In addition, up to 3 state team members from each participating state will present on their POS model and its implementation at the June 14-16, 2010 Career Clusters Institute in Denver CO.

**Background and Introduction**

The state technical assistance (TA) academy on POS is funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) through the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (NRCCTE). The NRCCTE TA Academy supports states in improving of the quality of career and technical education (CTE) instruction provided to secondary and postsecondary students by supporting their accountability and program needs. The Academy for Educational Development (AED) serves as the project lead, teaming with MPR Associates, Inc. and the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) to design and deliver technical assistance services.

The TA academy is intended to aid states in building capacity for assisting local education agencies and postsecondary institutions in developing “green-focused” POS models. These models will be developed for both urban and rural settings. States will design POS models that prepare secondary and postsecondary students for high skill, high wage, high demand employment in positions associated with “green-focused” jobs in any of the 16 Career Clusters, including those aligned with the President’s priorities for green technology in energy, transportation, housing, and construction. The intent of this project is to build a replicable implementation model(s) for bringing POS to scale within states.

**Structure of the TA Academy**

Each of the five participating states is required to assemble a team of 8-10 people, including the state CTE director and key staff, local secondary and postsecondary CTE faculty and curriculum developers/coordinators, and industry representatives. Academy faculty will work with each state over a 12-month period, with services provided by state team facilitators, content experts with knowledge of POS development, secondary and postsecondary faculty and curriculum specialists from “green-focused” CTE programs, and experts drawn from “green-focused” industries and fields. The Academy will offer deep content and understanding related to the four required core components of POS and the design of “green-focused” educational training programs. Services will be offered through a variety of approaches that will combine content expert sessions with peer-to-peer discussions, following the Data Quality Institute model used by OVAE to improve the quality of state accountability systems. A series of webinars will be offered to all states by the NASDCTEc. These will explore, in detail, the core components of POS and their additional supporting components.

### **Programs of Study in Perkins IV**

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) envisions that all students will achieve challenging academic and technical standards, and be prepared for high-skill, high-wage, or high-demand occupations in current or emerging professions in a 21<sup>st</sup> century, global economy. To this end, Perkins IV requires states to offer “career and technical POS” that prepare students to make successful transitions to postsecondary education and the workplace. Section 122(a) of Perkins IV describes the key components of a career and technical program of study—

Specifically, Perkins IV mandates that Programs of Study (POS), at a minimum

- Incorporate and align secondary and postsecondary education elements,
- Include academic and CTE content in a coordinated, non-duplicative progression of courses,
- Offer the opportunity, where appropriate, for secondary students to acquire postsecondary credits, and
- Lead to an industry-recognized credential or certificate at the postsecondary level, or an associate or baccalaureate degree.

While these four components establish the minimal expectations for POS design, 10 components have been identified that support the development and implementation of effective programs of study. Although all components are important, they are neither independent nor of equal priority: POS developers must identify the most pressing components for state or local adoption, taking into consideration their relative need within their educational context.

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*A program of study* is a structured sequence of academic and career and technical education courses that lead to a postsecondary-level credential.

*- Operational definition of a program of study*

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### **Purpose of Self-Assessment**

The self assessment tool is a diagnostic instrument to leverage coordination and collaboration among POS stakeholders. The intended audience for the self-assessment results is the state planning team for “green-focused” programs of study. By spending time considering the current condition of your state’s development of POS, an honest self-assessment can help to promote conversation and dialogue about:

- What progress has the state made with each of the POS components and subcomponents?
- What POS components does the state feel it should focus on for future development and implementation?
- Where does the state feel it needs further assistance to improve its POS?

The feedback received from an honest self-assessment reflection on the current status of the state's POS development will contribute to the creation of a reasonable and coherent Technical Assistance Academy Action Plan, including the identification of technical assistance expert supports. The process of the self-assessment also provides value beyond just meeting an expected TA Academy task because it:

- Builds commitment and ownership on the part of the state-level staff and stakeholders who participate in the process.
- Promotes team building and consensus among state career and technical education leaders and industry partners.
- Fosters collaboration among other CTE stakeholders such as economic and workforce development agency staff.
- Increases the capacity for strategic thinking about what constitutes programs of study.
- Builds an understanding of what the federal government and national organizations expect of states with respect to quality program of study design and implementation.

In addition, the self-assessment will help facilitators in the following ways:

- Increase understanding of what kinds of assistance states need.
- Provide a platform for asking penetrating questions about green POS development.
- Test assumptions about the process.

### **Directions for Use**

The following steps are recommended to conduct this self-assessment. (Note: you will also be asked to complete this self-assessment again (1) midway through and (2) at the end of the 10-month TA Academy.)

- Identify and recruit the key POS TA Academy stakeholders to complete the self-assessment. A variety of approaches to conducting this step are possible. One possibility is to have a representative team of state-level decision-makers complete the instrument as a group. Another approach is to have individual stakeholders fill out the tool separately, and then have the individual results compiled for group discussion and instrument completion. Yet a third way is to have the instrument completed by one or two people who are most knowledgeable of the state's CTE program. Regardless of the approach used, however, it is important to enlist input from key stakeholder groups – secondary educators, postsecondary educators, business/industry partners, and economic and workforce development agency representatives. The facilitator and state lead will discuss which individuals should be asked to complete the self assessment.

*Note:* It is recognized individual TA Academy stakeholders may have various levels of understanding on programs of study and limited familiarity with specific levels of detail regarding your state’s program of study development. Individuals who are asked to complete the self-assessment should address *only those areas with which they are familiar*.

- Complete the self-assessment. Rate each POS component and its subcomponents. Critically think about how much progress your state has made in achieving that component and rate your state using the assessment rubric.
- After the self assessment is completed overall results should be shared with all stakeholders as part of this dynamic process of inquiry and reflection. Self-assessment results will be a key to the establishment of a reasonable Action Plan. The Action Plan will be a dynamic document that guides the state’s development of its “green-focused” program of study.

### Optional Uses

The primary use of this self-assessment is to help guide states’ POS development efforts through careful study of each POS component. However, states may find it helpful to use the tool in other ways, for example as:

- A continuous improvement tool for reviewing local grantee programs of study.
- An instructional device for orienting new staff (or re-acquainting veterans) about what comprises “quality” in the development of programs of study.

It is important to remember that high quality is a moving target. States should consider completing this self-assessment on a regular basis to continually monitor the impact of their efforts to implement quality programs of study.

### Scoring Rubric for POS Components

Rating	Rubric
<b>None</b>	No assistance needed. Our state can use existing POS framework to address green-focused POS.
<b>Some</b>	Some assistance needed. Our state has some capacity but would like additional assistance.
<b>Extensive</b>	Extensive assistance needed. Our state has very little capacity and needs a great deal of assistance.

Following each section, there is space for you to provide detail on why you selected the rating that you did for that component. That is, what has your state done, and what assistance is needed and why?

## Components of a Program of Study – with Subcomponents

1. Sustainable Leadership and Shared Planning	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
A joint statement from partnering organizations laying out a common vision and goals for POS			
Interagency efforts to support POS design, for example providing opportunities for high school teachers and college faculty to engage in collaborative planning			
Key leaders advocating for funding, equipment, and other resources within the educational system, as well as with business/industry, and other community stakeholders			
Within institutions, sufficient planning time for teachers and faculty to develop curriculum and instructional strategies			

Please explain what you have done in terms of creating *sustainable leadership and shared planning* for POS. What assistance is needed and why?

2. Partnerships Among Education, Business, and Other Key Stakeholders	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
Create written memorandum of understanding that elaborates the roles and responsibilities of partnership members			

Identify, validate, and update the technical and workforce readiness skills that should be taught within a POS			
Conduct analyses of economic and workforce trends to identify statewide (or regional) POS to be created, expanded, or eliminated			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of creating <i>partnerships among education, business, and other key stakeholders</i> to develop and support POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

<b>3. Legislation and Policies</b>	<b>No Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Some Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Extensive Assistance Needed</b>
Establish formalized procedures for the design, implementation or elimination of state and/or local programs of study			
Provide for state and/or local funding for programs of study			
Provide opportunities for any secondary student to participate in a program of study			

Require secondary students to develop an individual graduation or career plan			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of creating <i>legislation and policies</i> to support POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

<b>4. Aligned Secondary and Postsecondary Education Elements</b>	<b>No Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Some Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Extensive Assistance Needed</b>
Move from broad knowledge and skill standards in lower grades (i.e., Career Cluster essential, foundation, and pathway levels), to increasingly more occupationally specific coursework			
Offer a non-duplicative sequence of courses, beginning no later than 9 <sup>th</sup> grade, which culminates in the award of a postsecondary credential, certificate, or degree			
Ensure that standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments are aligned horizontally and vertically			
<b>Please explain what you have done in terms of <i>aligning secondary and postsecondary education elements</i>. What assistance is needed and why?</b>			

5. Rigorous Academic and Technical Standards and Assessments	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
Incorporation of state-recognized academic standards that are required of all students for graduation, and industry-recognized technical standards that are valued in the workplace			
Integrate academic and technical standards, curriculum and assessments across all POS to provide a real-world context for learning			
Employ industry-based technical skill assessments, where available and appropriate, or rely on state developed or approved assessments where industry-based exams do not exist			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of developing <i>rigorous academic and technical standards and assessments</i>. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

6. Credit Transfer Agreements	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
Provide a systematic, seamless process for students to earn college credit for postsecondary courses taken in high school, transfer high school credit to any two- and four-year institutions in the state, and transfer credit earned at any two-year college to any other two- or four-year institution in the state			
Describe the expectations and requirements for, at a minimum, teacher and faculty qualifications, course prerequisites, postsecondary entry requirements, location of courses, tuition reimbursement, and credit transfer process			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of developing <i>credit transfer agreements</i>. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

<b>7. Accountability and Evaluation</b>	<b>No Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Some Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Extensive Assistance Needed</b>
Provide for administrative record matching of student education and employment data (i.e., Unemployment Insurance (UI) Wage Records).			
Yield valid and reliable data on key student outcomes (indicators) as referenced in Perkins and other relevant federal and state legislation			
Include the “10 Essential Elements of A State Longitudinal Data System” identified by the Data Quality Campaign,			
Provide timely data to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of programs of study			
<b>Please explain what you have done in terms of <i>accountability and evaluation</i> around POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b>			

8. Innovative Teaching and Learning Strategies	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
Employ work-based, project-based, and problem-based learning			
Incorporate team-building, critical-thinking, and problem solving			
Are jointly led to the greatest extent possible by interdisciplinary teaching teams of academic and technical teachers or faculty			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of creating and supporting <i>innovative teaching and learning strategies</i> in POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

<b>9. Guidance, Counseling, and Advising</b>	<b>No Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Some Assistance Needed</b>	<b>Extensive Assistance Needed</b>
Offer information and tools to help students learn about postsecondary education and career options			
Provide information and resources for parents to help their children prepare for college and careers			
Offer Web-based resources and tools for obtaining student financial assistance			
Offer resources for students to identify their career interests and aptitudes, and to select an appropriate program of study no later than in 9 <sup>th</sup> grade			
Based on state and/or local guidance and counseling standards and follow, to the extent practicable, OVAE's National Career Development Guidelines			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of <i>guidance, counseling, and advising</i> around POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			

10. Professional Development	No Assistance Needed	Some Assistance Needed	Extensive Assistance Needed
Sustained, intensive, and focused			
Supports alignment of curriculum from grade to grade (9 – 12) and from secondary to postsecondary education (vertical alignment)			
Offers a forum for the development and implementation of innovative and effective teaching and learning strategies			
Supports the development of integrated academic and career and technical curriculum and instruction (horizontal alignment)			
<p><b>Please explain what you have done in terms of creating <i>professional development</i> around POS. What assistance is needed and why?</b></p>			